

Mr. Arnold J. Kleiner
WMAR-TV
6400 York Road
Baltimore, Md. 21212

7627 Old Receiver Road
Frederick, Md. 21701
2/14/89

Dear Mr. Kleiner,

I appreciate your letter of the 10th but by now I've forgotten what I wrote. I did not meant to imply that the station subscribed to the views it aired, if I did that, and I am well aware of the controversies surrounding the assassination of President Kennedy and the many theories. That you put "new details" in quotes reflects the fact that you, like most people, know nothing about them. They are real and one of the reasons so many know nothing about them is the fact that our WMAR-TV never find it possible to report them. As the news that by the standard of my reporting youth they most assuredly are.

I take this time on the chance of getting you to spend a few moments giving some thought to what I'll write and I enclose copies for the two gentlemen to whom you sent copies. I know who Mr. Shapiro is.

First I think you should know who I am and where I'm coming from. I'm more than a third as old as our country and I'm the first member of my more immediate family to be born into freedom -ever. I've been a reporter, an investigative reporter, a Senate editor and investigator, and my last salaried work, four decades ago, was in your field, as a news and special events editor. I was also an intelligence analyst, OSS. Not a spook. I wrote the first book on the Warren Commission and found such prejudice and fear I had to more or less invent the underground book to open that subject up. Without radio and TV that would have been impossible. I made a best-seller of it and I was broke and in debt when I began that work. Since then I've published five other works on the JFK assassination and its investigation and one on that of Dr. King. I've filed more Freedom of Information lawsuits than I can remember and I've brought most of what had been suppressed to light. The Congress, in fact, amended the FOIA over the official corruption in one of my earlier lawsuits. I believed what Andy Jackson said and for once made it real. "One determined man..." As a result of my book on the King assassination I became James Earl Ray's investigator. I conducted the successful habeas corpus investigation and the investigation that was used in an unsuccessful effort to get him a trial in two weeks of evidentiary hearing in Memphis. In the judge's long-delayed decision he actually held that guilt or innocence were immaterial. Today, my health seriously impaired, (so do not misunderstand that I'm looking to be on your station, I'm not and I haven't been able to drive out of Frederick for more than a decade), I still help others most of whom espouse views I do not agree with and often abominate. I consider that FOIA makes me surrogate for the people and have no right to refuse access to the information I got and still get from FOIA litigation to those with whom I disagree. I cannot give you the full extent of the archive I leave for posterity but I have about 60 file cabinets, including a few spares, most of them filled with once-secret government records, I can't begin to estimate how many boxes of records, etc. All will be a permanent public archive at Local Hood College, with no quid pro quo at all. And none of this has been news to Maryland's TV stations or major papers. None has in recent years been at all attractive to what you call "public affairs programs" and I stopped looking at years ago because they were so crappy, with usually ignorant guests only a little less ignorant than the moderators. Blaine Taylor is an illustration I'll come to. (Please excuse my typing. I may not keep my legs dependent and still have stitches in my better eye from successful surgery and I'm typing sort-of sidesaddle, both legs elevated.)

A self-promoter, no matter how ignorant, or one for whom someone else flacks, gets attention for hurtful views (hurtful if you care how our society works, as from your fine commentaries I believe you personally do) while serious, mature, responsible views and facts on the same matters are ignored. I believe it is the responsibility of TV not to depend on flackery but to seek and present what is real that people ought know. I know

people me

from personal experience how interested. I've heard from at least 15,000 strangers from all around the country. But never once from WMAR-TV. I repeat, I'm not seeking attention. If I ever had been you'd have heard from me.

You may not agree with my view on the matter but I tell you that I regard the assassination of any president as the greatest subversion in our system, no matter what the intent of any assassin may have been. I believe that alone endangers our system and the freedoms we have under it. I believe also that such a crime places the greatest obligations on the successor government to see to it that the crime is as thoroughly and honestly investigated and reported as is humanly possible. This did not happen with any of our political assassinations, the system in all elements, including all of the press, failed terribly, and that also endangered the system and is one of the major reasons for the widespread disenchantment in the land.

Let me illustrate this commentary on what its great success has meant to your medium. You found time to air Taylor and his crap and at the same time when there was a really worthwhile thing in the same field you ignored it entirely, even though there was a review in the Sun. A young man who has become a friend, Gerard "Chap" Selby, candidate for a master's degree in communications at College Park, looked me up about four years ago for help on the documentary he planned as his thesis on the JFK assassination. Already in debt for his education, he went farther into debt for his thesis. Those who could helped him. (I'm holding the schmaltz down but it is rich.) This included his girl friend. They are to be married when she graduates next year. He wore a car out in his travels, was his own cameraman, interviewer, producer, etc. He even slept in the car, as I understand it, when he had no funds for a motel. Against great odds he did a great job. Honored in your field but not on your station. His profs looked down their noses at his project. Uh, more of that theorizing, huh? He did not get to use the best equipment, which was reserved for those the profs thought would make better use. His first documentary, while he is still a student, won the prestigious Golden Eagle award of CINE, It will be shown in international competitions representing the United States for the present year. Yet this is not Maryland news! While completing his degree and working full-time at Discovery TV, he is trying to find it possible to do a sequel. His documentary was aired on A & E with ratings they regarded as exceptionally good. They'd have been better if he and I had not had to sue Zapruder so he could use that film. This delayed his ability to sign a contract until it was too late for any real promotion and for many mere listings. I'm sure he'll lend you a cassette and if you don't want to ask him, I will. You can't air it, I'm not trying to promote that. But it will give you an idea of what was and is available other than the idle and hurtful theorizing that you went for and others do all the time. It is hurtful because representative society cannot function with the people misinformed and misled and the institutions that failed will not reform as long as they are protected from the pressures required for even an interest in pretending reform. And I think that what this young man has done, aside from being worthy of attention, is an unrecognized lecture to others, telling them what they can do if they prepare themselves and strive, even against great odds.

I've read what Taylor gave you. To call it crap is to praise it. If I intend nothing personal in this. He is one of legions, some currently getting considerable attention and not a few bucks. He makes no mention of a single serious work and I'm sure he is entirely ignorant of not only their content- even their existence. No, I'm not against the first amendment. This is commentary on him and on you and your medium. The whole damned world turned around on these assassinations and none of you can find the interest or see the obligation to inform the people factually. Instead you further reduce the possibility of informing them honestly and factually. All any of you care about is some new crap that can be made exciting, as an invention can be, something to fill up some of the great amount of time you have to fill every day. (By the way, Selby is at Box 174, College Park 20740.)

Taylor gives awful stuff, like that British exploitation The Trial of Lee Harvey

Oswald. Redhead, the producer, was in touch with me before he came here, to get my books and ask if I'd help him. When I wrote ~~him~~ that I'd help him all I could but would not personally be part of any further theorizing to rip off the national mind while ripping of the purse I never heard from him again. And didn't want to. To Taylor his junk is, "marked as a historic landmark in quality television by any standard."

There is no theorizing in any of my work, by the way, and I've debunked most of the theories all of which are, to the best of my knowledge, invented or copied by those who do not trouble to learn what fact there is. Why work when you can fabricate and be popular and paid?

Taylor is high on Schein, one of the mafia-did-it kind. I have a simple way of evaluating people like him. When I have all this stuff so close to him and all of it is available to everyone, free, and he hasn't even asked to look at it, how interested is he or can he be in fact?

And if what you sent me is Taylor's resume, how much time has he had to learn any of the fact about those assassinations? He makes no reference to a single one or a single source of any. But he is an expert by puffery and he gets to mislead your audience and to misinform them and divert them away from real information.

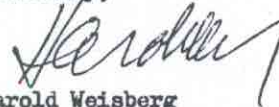
This, alas, is the way it works unless somebody gives a damn and tries to make it work better, to be more responsible, ~~in~~ to be the force for good that you are with your commentaries.

It does not have to be this way and we are having too much trouble surviving the fact that it is this way. It is this way because there is vested, profitable interest in making and keeping it this way, without any effort to learn whether or not it can still be profitable without practising National Enquirer TV.

I take this time, off the top of the head, in the hope you'll find the time to give it a little thought, as I hope Mr. Shapiro and Mr. White also will.

We no longer are what we were, no longer are as great as we were, we are sliding even more, and if people like you (pl) do not make some effort to make more and better out of your powerful, and attractive medium, the slide will become more and more dangerous and our precious and unique freedoms will be more endangered and yes, lost.

Sincerely,



Harold Weisberg